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The GREGORIAN REVIEW

Studies in Sacred Chant and Liturgy

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September 3, 1957

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Volume IV, Number 4

July-August, 1957

AN ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GREGORIAN INSTITUTE SUMMER SESSION OF 1957

at Mary Manse College Chapel July 26, 1957

Rev. H. F. Brucker, S.J.

It seems fitting at the close of your summer session to leave a thought with you suggested by the text of Our Holy Father's Encyclical of 1955 and by that portion of the Council of Trent on The Sacrifice of The Mass. These quotations stress a very fundamental principle of the Spiritual Life and lead us to conclude that there is a very clear responsibility placed upon those who have been assigned to preserve and promote Sacred Music. Let us say that we consider our work as a special Vocation within the Church.

“Since human nature,” says the Council of Trent, “does not easily lift itself to meditation of Divine Things without some outside help, our good Mother, the Church, in conformity with the discipline and tradition of the Apostles, has established certain rites and made use of certain ceremonies, (among which we place Sacred Music), to bring out the Majesty of the Divine Sacrifice and to incite the spirit of the Faithful to lift itself through these exterior signs of religion and piety to the contemplation of the sublime mysteries which lie hidden therein”. (*De Sacrifice Missae*, SS. XXII and XII Canon).

And next, Our Holy Father Pius XII reasons thus: “If the glory of God and His praise be the end of all creation, then man himself and all his actions should manifest and imitate, as far as possible, God’s infinite perfection for the praise and glory of the Creator. Man is born to attain this end, and hence he must conform himself and through his actions direct all the powers of his soul and body to glorify

and praise God. Hence art itself and the works of art must be judged in the light of their conformity and concord with man's last end."

Two thoughts are given prominence in the above quotations. The first of these states that Sacred Music is to be considered only in the light of its final end, namely, that it is a creature destined to give praise and glory to God, its Maker, and is never to go beyond that limit set by the Maker of all things beautiful.

The second leads us to consider that we who use the medium of Sacred Music as a means to an end, must cherish our work as a special vocation for which a certain preparation is most necessary.

Our present Holy Father and several of His predecessors have stated that the purpose of Sacred Music is *a means* which will aid and help the faithful the more easily and readily to turn their minds piously to God by the effect it may have and should have on the sense of sight and hearing. It is always to be considered as a medium by which one praises and glorifies God.

The use of this medium, however, is the element which constitutes a *Vocation* for those who by their office are charged with the responsibility of cultivating and promoting the art of Sacred Music. The first duty is, of course, the need of studying seriously and mastering, according to one's ability, the mechanics of Sacred Music. With this skill, we embellish the beauty of the Supreme Sacrifice of the Altar. This portion of our vocation you have been doing. You will be concerned with it also either by subsequent private study or in formal session in such an Institute as has been happily established in our midst. Our Holy Father does not neglect to presume that such study is necessary and that we should make every possible sacrifice in order to attain a better and more commanding knowledge of the Sacred Art.

Now follows the important and essential feature of our Vocation. Given the skill, the soul is to be conditioned for

the work of applying Sacred Music in the functions of the Liturgy. This vocation calls for a development of the virtue of Religion, a deeper and truer knowledge of God, whose gifts of nature we may possess. The greater the knowledge of God in us, the greater will be our opportunity of rendering to Him fuller praise and glory.

A pagan cannot reverence God, nor can he produce that religious virtue in others. A life which does not grow daily in stature with Christ cannot show forth His holiness or transmit to another the force which Sacred Music must have upon us. The Apostle of Sacred Music, the Sister, the Pastor, the Educator has a Vocation and that Vocation calls for Holiness, the Spirit of Faith and Reverence and Love. The Holy Father, to quote him again, says that "one who fails in Faith and conduct lacks *the inner eye* with which he might see what God's majesty and worship demand. Nor can he hope that his works, devoid of religion as they are, will ever breathe the piety and Faith that benefit God's temple and His holiness, even though they may show him to be an artist who is endowed with visible talent."

We look upon our Vocation in this light, that in approaching the sacred things of our religion, Holy Things demand Holiness. The Apostle of Sacred Music must be one in whom holiness is a personal and constant and loving effort. The Sister, the Educator, the Promoter, the Pastor of a Parish must have his heart set upon the praise and glory of God, as an ever-impending motive. When the Apostle approaches the altar, or takes his place in the choir, or stands before a group interested in learning the spirit and theory of Sacred Music, that approach is always to be one of Faith. Such an Apostle will meditate on the words of the sacred text of each Mass of every cycle of the Liturgical Year. He will play and sing with knowledge of the text, he will raise his voice of praise in song, because he prays as he sings, and prays when he plays. His artistry is governed by the understanding of the spirit of each season; and he is moved to praise God, because the habit of prayer has been deepened in his soul. The governing laws and restraints of the church are for him the bridle which keeps the fervor of his soul

and of his art within the proper limits. Thus his song is always a prayer and a hymn of praise. He is not primarily concerned with a musical effect. He is conscious that his skill and artistry are to be employed for one purpose, the praise of God. The other effect is bound to come, though we may never be aware of it. That effect will be God's moving and rewarding grace upon those attending the Divine Service. For the prayerfulness of our song and the reverence in our playing will be the means of helping the faithful to raise their hearts and souls to God. The Vocation we have is a high one. It is a part of the divine service. God has made it that way. Such a Vocation is not understood by the worldly, by those lacking in Faith. But we may be sure that the praise and glory we render to God by our life of prayer and active Faith, will enable others to raise themselves up to a better service of their Maker.

Our Vocation then requires study and skill. Our efforts must be methodical and continued. The application of the skill we acquire must be governed and restrained by the laws set down for us by our two great Popes, Pius X and Pius XII, in their Encyclicals on Sacred Music. Then we must learn through meditation to appreciate and to be filled with admiration for the mysteries of God. Frequently enough and periodically we should welcome in the spirit of humility some advice from those who possess the knowledge of experience; we should be pleased to find that we have enjoyed some measure of success in our work as an Apostle of Music, and we should welcome suggestions so that we may approach our ideal more closely. Honesty and fidelity to the ideals set forth for us by the church are always to be the qualities of an Apostle of Sacred Music.

We might take home with us today a thought we have framed in the form of a single prayer, and which day by day may help us to remain true to the responsibilities we have assumed as followers of this special Vocation:

May my soul be ever a more perfect image of Your own wonderful holiness; may the gifts which You have given me be ever employed to return to You the

praise and glory which You expect from a loving creature. May the skill I have acquired be used for You; and may my hands and tongue speak and sing the melody of Faith and Prayer. May You *use* me and the precious gifts of knowledge and art so graciously bestowed on me, to incite others to join me in the great liturgical Sacrifice of praising and glorifying You. And may we ever manifest in word and example the spirit of sweet and obedient conformity in pursuing our sacred Vocation according to the mind of Mother Church.

THE ENCYCLICAL *MUSICAE SACRAE* *DISCIPLINA*

by Msgr. Fiorenzo Romita

Nature and Structure of the Pontifical Document

In order to appreciate in an objective fashion the scope of the latest pontifical document on sacred music, it is necessary, above all else, to clarify its nature, not only from the strictly jurisdictional point of view, but also from the historical point of view, taking this latter in its broadest sense, that is, by relating this document to the traditions of the past and the present situation, and to the developments which sacred music might now undergo by reason of the principles set forth by the Encyclical.

We shall limit ourselves to a study of the second aspect, after we have set forth the essential points of the recent pontifical document. From the jurisdictional point of view, we know that an *Encyclical Letter* is an essentially doctrinal document which the Sovereign Pontiff sends, as Doctor of the Universal Church, to the Catholic Hierarchy, in order to determine or clarify the fundamental principles which should inspire the clergy and faithful in order to resolve both old and new problems which arise in a certain area of the spiritual life. In the present case, this is in the domain of sacred music, which, as the recent Encyclical has once more confirmed and illustrated with perfect clarity, is unique among the fine arts as being the most directly related to the very center of Catholic spiritual life, the liturgy.

In contrast, a *Regulation* (such as those of 1884 and 1894 of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on sacred music), an *Instruction* (such as the *Motu Proprio* of St. Pius), an *Apostolic Constitution* (such as the *Divini Cultus sanctitatem* of Pius XI) all set forth with authority, although in different

ways and with differing degrees of jurisdictional obligation, the particular and analytical norms of essentially practical and disciplinary nature, although they may also recall and propose, as occasion demands, certain principles of a general nature, but without any precise intention of making a theory or system. It would, however, be erroneous to wish to discover in the recent Encyclical any presently-applicable norms on sacred music.

Naturally, after viewing the principles which have just been established in this way by the Encyclical, we feel a necessity for a deep and radical revision and a further elaboration and intergration of musical legislation which has been in force up to now, in order that these general principles may be put into practice. But for the time being it must be on these general principles that specialists and church musicians will focus their attention. Moreover, it is on this aspect, too, that we shall concentrate in this brief commentary.

It is quite clear that the recent pontifical document, without going into the myriad details which discussion might raise, has a position of unique importance in the history of legislation dealing with sacred music. This will be either because of the form in which it was promulgated (that is, an Encyclical Letter, the most solemn and most authoritative of all pontifical documents), or because of its universality, since it was addressed to the Episcopacy of the entire Catholic world, as well as of those territories subject to a common law such as oriental or missionary, or because of the scope of the subject matter which, without, as we have said, getting to details, does touch upon the more important problems of sacred music.

Moreover, from this point of view, the Encyclical *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina* ranks without comparison at the top of the scale of respective values of legislative documents in this regard, being truly the first Encyclical of universal scope on sacred music. We should note in this regard that the Encyclical *Annus qui* of Benedict XIV, dated February 19, 1749, which, because of the extent of its subject and the erudition with which it is treated, still holds today a primacy

which it is not easy to surpass, remains nevertheless a document of restricted scope, since it was sent to the bishops of the Pontifical State to have them restore in their dioceses the various kinds of sacred music. This was done in view of the imminent celebration of the Holy Year of 1750, and to seek to have those abuses eliminated which had infiltrated the services and which would have scandalized pilgrims visiting the area.

Before entering the internal analysis of the Encyclical, it may be worthwhile to examine briefly its exterior form, an element which reflects the typically Roman style and mentality of the ecclesiastical Legislator.

Anyone who has followed the course of the heated discussions which have been developed for over a century in regard to sacred music, up to the lively polemics of our day, knows full well the *mira varietas* of the opinions and methods being promulgated by one or another group. The Encyclical, however, although presenting this *mira varietas* clearly (and whoever knows well enough how to read between the lines will easily find allusions, direct or indirect, to certain trends and movements), the Encyclical, we have said, places itself above the controversy and sets forth in four parts — standing like the four great pillars of a sturdy edifice of classical form — the principles which form the basis of the resolution of the varying points of view which we have noted.

Since we are here concerned with music, we might also compare this Encyclical with a great symphonic composition, which, in the course of four movements, develops with perfect mastery the proposed theme.

After the short introduction, the First Part, the first movement, if you will, is developed like an *Andante*, which, with boldness and power in its construction, begins with the prototype of music in God (according to the Augustinian conception, of Platonic inspiration) and, traversing a bridge as long as it is strong, arrives at the final developments within us of the divine art of sounds.

The Second Part, the second "movement", is like an *Adagio*, in which the soul is elevated to the contemplation of the Catholic aesthetic of art in general, of sacred and religious art, and particularly of sacred music. Then, in an intensive and expressive crescendo, it arrives at the sublime *aria*, bordering on ecstasy, which sings of the unique dignity of sacred music and of church musicians.

The Third Part, the third movement, like a *Rondo*, treats successively of sacred music in its various forms, its styles and its kinds.

Finally, the Fourth Part, the fourth movement, is like an *Allegro energico*, which conveys the laborious rhythm of those who are called to put into practice the reform and restoration of sacred music in our day.

The Spirit Which Shapes the Encyclical; Its Thread of Continuity

The element which directly links the four parts of the Encyclical and the various developments of each part, as the soul is bound to the body, is the spirit which shapes it, and which is nothing more than the Catholic conception of art and sacred music.

We know of the unfortunate wanderings which certain systems of thought, following the opposite path of the *philosophia perennis*, have provoked in the domain of aesthetics in general and in that of music in particular, with the inevitable consequence in artistic production, particularly of music, in recent times.

Rejecting the necessary dependance on a transcendant principle, with the pretext of autonomy and freedom, the artist finds himself, alas, like the proverbial ship without a rudder, without the safe and sure guide which conducts his genius to a certain goal, having before him neither the North Star to guide him in his course, nor the beacon to keep him from shipwreck.

All this is not freedom, but distraction, which sometimes cultivates folly and leads to the absurd. The furor of some contemporary music is proof of this.

The Encyclical, without pretending to "give laws of aesthetic or technical nature as regards the noble discipline of music", wishes rather "that it be preserved from anything that could diminish its dignity, called as it (music) is to lend its power in an area of such great importance as that of the divine cult".¹

Modern musicians and artists are free, then, to go and come from one experiment to the next, within the noisy bogs of the attempts to which profane art and music are currently given over.

It is quite clear, however, that the Church does not and cannot tolerate similar experiments *quasi in corpore vili*, in matters concerning the divine cult. Too, whereas the Church opens the doors of the temple to everything that "the genius of man has been able to create of the good and beautiful over the course of centuries, under the conditions that the liturgical laws be respected,"² "She must exclude from sacred music with utmost care . . . everything unsuited to the divine cult or which prevents the faithful from lifting their souls to God."³

This clarification which confirms and strengthens the principles of the well-known *Instruction* of the Holy Office on sacred art was more needed than ever before. All artists, even those not directly associated with sacred art, should be grateful to the Church, which, following the glorious tradition which has made of Her an enlightened patron of the arts, has once more shown them the true path of true art.

Positively, then, the Encyclical sets forth the principles of sacred music, clarifying its very high dignity and its supernatural end with such noble and lofty words and expressions

1. *La Liturgie* (second edition), No. 751.

2. *Motu Proprio* of St. Pius X, November 22, 1903.

3. Encyclical *Musicae Sacrae*

that we have probably never before been offered anything similar in a pontifical document.⁴ Moreover, I have no fear of exaggeration in saying that this passage of the Encyclical is like a *Credo* of sacred music and merits for that reason to be profoundly meditated upon, assimilated and professed by church musicians . . . and not only by musicians, but by all those who live in the Church.

Necessarily bound to this clarification of sacred music is the exalting of the mission of those who, in various ways, have devoted themselves to cultivate or promote it. "All such persons, without doubt," solemnly states the Encyclical, "truly and properly carry out an apostolate, even though in diverse and varied ways. By virtue of their office, they are not merely artists and masters, but also ministers and collaborators with Jesus Christ in the apostolate, and they must strive to manifest by their conduct the dignity of their functions."

And here we enter that element which, following the Catholic conception of art and sacred music, constitutes the unifying thread of the whole Encyclical: I mean the spiritual position of the artist and musician in regard to Religion, in relationship with those pastoral aims which sacred music in particular assumes.

"The artist who does not have faith and who is far from God in soul and in conduct", affirms the Sovereign Pontiff, "should not in any way take part in sacred art. He does not in fact possess that interior vision which would permit him to see what is required by the majesty of God and His cult. We cannot hope that his works, deprived of religious inspiration, even though they represent a man who knows his art and is amply provided with technical proficiency, will be able to breathe forth that faith and piety which are called for by the majesty of the temple of God. Consequently, neither can they be admitted by the Church, the guardian and judge of the religious life.

4. *Ibid.*

“As for the artist whose faith is firm and life worthy of a Christian, let him follow the impulse of his love of God and religiously make use of the gifts which God has given him; let him strive to express by the colors, lines, sounds, and chants those truths which he believes and the piety which he professes, and this in a manner so accurate and acceptable that this sacred exercise may be for him an act of religion, and for the people a powerful stimulus to faith and piety.”

There is, therefore, a clear and irresolvable antithesis between the worldly musician and the church musician, an antithesis which does not stem from purely aesthetic or technical reasons, since both must resolve in a similar way their aesthetic and technical problems, according to the artistic means of expression which they possess.

The antithesis is, on the contrary, entirely in the inner source of their inspiration. In the worldly artist it comes from sentiments of a more or less noble nature, but which are always human and earthly (when they are not downright carnal or sensual, or when they do not stem, as the Encyclical makes to clear, from a blind instinct which we call the *estro*).

The church artist, on the other hand, acts under the drive of a supernatural element, charity, or, to use the expression of the Encyclical, the love of God, Who, while He inspires and fills the soul of the musician in his human acts and his creative activity, confers on his musical work a character and force which, beyond results due to mere technical competence and ability within the art, is conveyed by a raising to God of the soul of the composer himself and those of the faithful who hear his music.

Thus it is that a church musician who knows how to respond fully to this ascetic and mystic vocation has already within himself what he needs to create true sacred art. He already knows what must be done, without need for many rules and odious prohibitions. His route he can find himself in the inner inspiration of his heart, which is enlightened and enflamed with the infinite beauty of the divine mysteries, and which translates it into music which becomes its faithful echo.

The words of St. Augustine have, then, great value for the church musician: *Ama et fac quod vis.* For the musician, this is the only true principle, since real music is born of charity: *Cantare amantis est*, and serves to increase and intensify it.

Such is the true and full freedom of the Catholic artist and church musician. This is a liberty which he can and must use to attain, first, the latreutic end of the liturgy, and then, of sacred music (the honor due God, to which will be consecrated the best which musical art can produce), but also the soteriological end (the salvation of souls, dependent on certain special suggestions by which sacred music raises the soul of the one who prays to God).

In this way, the Encyclical, although it shows the principles which should guide Catholic art and artists, also shows, so to speak, in every line, the pastoral intentions which the Church understands to be linked to sacred music.

Nova and Vetera in the Encyclical

It is with a constant eye to these profound and fruitful truths that one may and should consider certain positions of the Encyclical, which have seemed to some misdirected readers to be dictated by a certain broad point of view, not to say laxity.

The Use of Instruments

One of the important questions concerns the use of instruments, and in particular the violin, unjustly identified with romanticism, worldliness and even sensuality.

That these last-mentioned characteristics are obviously and clearly those of a certain amount of the violin repertoire, nobody can deny. This explains why, at the beginning of the century, in a climate of antiromantic reform, severe limitations were exercised regarding the use of this instrument.

No one, however, can deny a composer of sacred music, if he fully observes the ideal, of course, which the Encyclical sets, the right to use this extremely effective instrument for the expression of various sentiments of the soul, with a view toward raising his soul to God and to similarly influence the souls of the faithful. Moreover, what we can say for the violin can also be said for the other stringed instruments.

Let one merely think of certain Bach arias, and those of Handel, to certain "Sonatas of the church" of the eighteenth century, all steeped in the most profound religious sentiment.

The danger of abuses does not lie only in the expressive power of these bowed instruments, but rather in the composer and in the performer who can apply them in a profane manner. It is, therefore, above themselves, in the very source where they find their inspiration that the attention must be focused, with a seeking after an interpretation consonant with the Catholic spirit of art and music.

What we have said for the bowed instruments holds true also for the other instruments which, either alone or with the organ, according to the Encyclical, can be used in sacred music. It seemed superfluous to the Sovereign Pontiff to give a list of those which are admitted and those which are forbidden, to decide whether they may be used merely as accompaniment for the choir, or alone, although we must understand that they are always to be used according to the conditions which are applied to the use of the organ. All these questions and other decisions or classifications of exterior character have no meaning for the church musician, since he, if he is a real church musician, will certainly know well enough himself when and how to use the means which musical art and technique, even the most modern, have placed at his disposition for the creation of true sacred art. In this regard I think of the *Mass in E Minor* of Anton Bruckner, written for choir and brass orchestra, which, in spite of the means employed, provides us with a real masterpiece of authentic religious art, which, according to some authorities, can be ranked with the *Missa Papae Marcellae* of Palestrina.

On the other hand, a mere conformity to certain rules and prohibitions regarding instruments, including the organ, does not guarantee at all that religious inspiration will come, although it is this very inspiration which is vital for the creation of real sacred music. To this extent it is true, even in this field of endeavor, that *Spiritus est qui vivificat; littera autem occidit.*

Mixed Choirs

In the same way we find the question of mixed choirs discussed here. They are permitted by the Encyclical when the male *scholae cantorum* or choirs, or the *Pueri Cantores* are either totally lacking or weak in numbers. This concession is not new. It goes back to St. Pius X, who approved the generally equivalent decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites in this matter, a decree which is now incorporated by the Encyclical.

We all know the regulations of liturgical, moral and aesthetic nature against the singing of women in church, and these prescriptions are still held valid by the Encyclical. In this light, mixed choirs are merely a substitute for the usual *scholae cantorum* and the *Pueri Cantores*, who are the only real liturgical choirs given an official function.

But between the elimination of all singing in church (and, consequently, of the solemn liturgy) due to a lack of male choirs or boys choirs, and the tolerance, with the precautions which are imposed, of the use of mixed choirs (which are considered as being the people or a segment of the congregation which fills in the lack of male singers), and also to maintain, in general, the living tradition of singing in the Church, the Sovereign Pontiff, following the footsteps of St. Pius X, has chosen this second solution, which, without involving a matter of principle, nevertheless resolves a practical problem of great importance, and thus saves, by guaranteeing singers, the general principle of the special force which music brings to bear on the divine services and on the piety of the faithful.

In fact, the *schola cantorum* and the usual male choir, as a matter of principle, must always be given their traditional and glorious primacy in the liturgical and artistic domain, even though, alas, we must deplore not only the small number of male choirs, but also their decline of liturgical spirit and even of their artistic standards, both of which are the consequences of complex causes for the exposition of which there is no space here.

The decrease in these *scholae* and their decadence have providentially called forth the vast movement of *Pueri Cantores* who, by themselves or with a few men's voices, maintain intact the role of the cantor, holder of a real liturgical rank, and on the artistic side, they can attain a standard of excellence similar to that of the *schola* or male choir.

Yet, wherever circumstances do not provide these means, mixed choirs, well-trained and capably directed, can substitute for the liturgical choir and attain, on the artistic plane, very fine results.

The Burning Question of Liturgical Language

A similar approach is made to the subject of the liturgical language. Nearly everybody has followed the well-known arguments which, particularly in recent years, have been given prominence in this respect in books, articles, speeches and the like.

On one hand the need (which there can be no question of challenging) for the unity and the universality of the liturgy requires a unity and universality of language, that of the tradition. On the other hand, the pastoral concern to enable the faithful to live the reality of the divine mysteries, not only in referring themselves implicitly to the intentions of the celebrant, but also in participating in the liturgy individually and explicitly taking the proper role, this concern, we say, has brought about a keen awareness of the need for a liturgical language accessible to the faithful and not merely to the celebrant.

On these two aspects of the question much has been written and said, sometimes with a passionate partisanship which approaches fanaticism.

The Encyclical, with a characteristically Roman clarity and serenity, has gathered and blended the two opposing points of view in a beautifully balanced way, a way which suffices, or should suffice, to calm the apprehensiveness of the partisans of both camps.

All taken into account, the Encyclical maintains the principle of unity and universality of the liturgical language. Then, while tolerating contrary practices which were born of historical circumstances which were special to certain locations, or under special conditions, at least in those cases where these contrary practices could not be prudently eliminated, the Encyclical opposes at the same time that such customs be introduced in new areas. Moreover, in the very areas where these contrary practices are tolerated the Ordinaries of the dioceses are exhorted to promote the use of Gregorian chant, indissolubly linked to the use of Latin, among the faithful, in order that they "learn from infancy at least the easier Gregorian melodies and those most used, and know how to use them in the liturgical ceremonies, so that in this way, too, the unity and universality of the Church may ever be more greatly manifested."

The conclusion of all this is that the principle of using Latin as the liturgical language is clearly affirmed, and that the integral putting into practice of this principle is demanded, even in those places where, for special reasons, it has previously been de-emphasized.

And it is very right that this should be so from the standpoint of principle, for without entering into the many reasons of opportunity or convenience, who, then, is it who performs the holy liturgy, to use the terms of the Encyclical *Mediator Dei*, if not the sacred Hierarchy, whose own language is rightfully that of the Church, namely Latin?

On the other hand, full satisfaction is granted to pastoral concerns regarding the active participation of the faithful in the holy mysteries. The faithful can today be better trained than in the past, and can be instructed by liturgical catechetics, oral as well as written. This is what the Encyclical explains so well, drawing upon the teaching of the Fathers of the Council of Trent, who had to resolve in their day, under conditions much more difficult than those of today, the problem of the unity of liturgical language and that of the participation of the faithful in the holy liturgy.

Popular Hymnody

Where, on the other hand, the Encyclical has left to the people, and thus to the vernacular tongue, which is properly that of the people, a wide field of action is in popular hymnody, on which the Sovereign Pontiff spends a certain length of time, and at more than one insistence, with an urgency and particular care, an indication of the fine and unerring pastoral awareness of Pius XII.

He had already touched upon this subject in the Encyclical *Mediator*, which, it should be said for history, was the first instance of such treatment in a pontifical document, and what is more, in an Encyclical.

But in the Encyclical *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina* we find a real treatise on popular hymnody, religious and sacred, for all geographical areas.

Religious Music

No one will be surprised to find that religious music of a sort not designed for the liturgy should have merited a discussion in a solemn pontifical document. It is a matter of a mere mention, to tell the truth, but yet it suffices to define this kind of music which, in parallel to sacred music, can exercise a great and beneficial influence over the souls of the faithful. This is the very pastoral concern of which we have just spoken.

Yet the Encyclical has thus determined the principle upon which can then be based the entire task of regulation. This is an indication of a remarkable comprehension toward the composer, who today is turning with more and more fervor to this kind of music. It is also a comprehension toward the people, who understand with increasing sympathy these compositions of religious nature. It is manifested by this opening of a path to more fruitful accomplishments in this domain, not merely, and perhaps not so much in the artistic sense as in the spiritual sense, and, we repeat, the pastoral sense. This is certainly the main aspect under which the Encyclical mentions religious music, "which although it is not designed principally for the service of the holy liturgy, nevertheless conveys many desirable features to religion through its content and its aims."

The Encyclical in its Historical Aspects

More complex and delicate (and in certain ways, perhaps even premature), is the examination of the Encyclical in its historical aspects.

No doubt in relationship with the tradition of the recent past, the new Pontifical document marks a decisive development in the interest which the Holy See has taken in music in general, and especially in contemporary music.

We do not mean to imply that the new Encyclical constitutes an antithesis of the *Motu Proprio* (which, of course, it reaffirms as the document which St. Pius X has justly called the "juridical code of sacred music"); nor do we imply that it represents a revolution in the secular tradition of the Church in this matter, synthesized by the "norms wisely established by St. Pius X", which are the very terms of the Encyclical. But Pius XII, with the intention of confirming and inculcating these norms still further, proposes to give them also "a new light, to corroborate them by new reasonings," and this is where we find a new accent in pontifical teaching,—"in order that this very noble art of sacred music, conforming to new requirements and enriched in a certain

manner, may continually respond more fully to its purpose." From this we can see clearly enough that where the *Motu Proprio*, in order to accomplish a reform of sacred music, which at that time was deeply contaminated by theatrical music, may have seemed reactionary to some persons (particularly in the severity of criteria which some of its interpreters thought wise to adopt and in the polemic virulence of certain reformers), the Encyclical *Musicae sacrae*, beginning with the results achieved in fifty years of reform under the aegis of St. Pius X and his famous document on sacred music, can today give directives inspired by a broader and more realistic perspective, provided the legislator by the absence or near absence of any danger of misemphasis.

Naturally this greater serenity and tranquility is completely to the advantage of sacred art and the artist, who today feels really free of any exterior constraints and any odious prohibitions or restrictions, free to follow only the suggestions of his inner inspiration, enlightened and strengthened by *Caritas*.

And it is in this full freedom of the Catholic artist that we find the first and inexhaustible source of the renewal of sacred music as an art, fifty years after the reform of St. Pius X, which, although it had the unquestionable value of restoring to the music which was to be performed in church its original sacred character, did not, with few exceptions build and expand upon the glorious musical tradition of the Catholic Church according to the splendid example of classic polyphony.

It is a fact which we can deplore as much as we like, but which we cannot deny, that the great lay musicians of our day take little real interest in liturgical music as exemplified during the last fifty years. They show it only indifference except when they are openly hostile to a certain kind of music which passes for liturgical art although it is not at all artistic, even though artistic value is one of the essential qualities of the liturgy, and in that sense, of sacred music. Except for the works of certain composers, who, moreover, have made their best and most abundant contribution in the

domain of general religious music rather than in that of sacred music, liturgical music or extra-liturgical music, except for these, we say, all the rest, generally speaking, although they are not lacking in quantity, certainly do not shine in the power of their inspiration, the newness or freshness of their language or the strength of their construction.

Thus two currents can be perceived which, besides being divergent in their means and their aims, are also composed of elements which are completely different from each other in both quantity and quality.

One of these currents is formed by a legion of persons, mostly clergy and religious, motivated by the highest intentions and desirous of creating sacred music, but almost always without artistic talent or technical preparation, or lazily wallowing in the quagmires of hackneyed styles.

The other current is formed of a small number of great lay musicians who have achieved honor and continue to do so both here and abroad, but who have turned their backs on church music.

Some people have thought it logical to blame this state of affairs, which is a sign of decadence, on the *Motu Proprio* of St. Pius X, since in that famous document modern music was viewed with a manifest spirit of opposition. Was it not, they said, unavoidable from that standpoint that the great musicians of the day would feel rejected from the Church and left only to the more worldly fields of action?

In reality the very opposite has been the case. It was the great musicians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who, drawn by the seduction of romantic opera, brought into even the music of the Church the spirit and forms of the theater. It was, then, entirely natural that the Church should react against this serious contamination of a basically moral, but also artistic nature. This is particularly true, since all kinds of music require their proper forms, just as every person, according to the idea or feeling that he senses, requires a facial expression in accord with it, a demeanor and gestures proper to him, and a personal way of dressing.

In truth, in his *Motu Proprio* St. Pius X, as we have already said, reasserts, in regard to modern sacred music, the constant principle by which "the Church has always recognized and favored progress in the arts, admitting to the service of the cult everything that the genius of man has been able to create as good and beautiful over the course of centuries, under the condition that the liturgical laws be respected. "Consequently" he continued, "the most recent modern music is also admitted to the church, for it, too, provides compositions whose value, soberness and gravity make them worthy in every respect of the liturgical functions." This recognition seems to have been addressed to German sacred music of the time rather than to Italian music, which, in contrast was the object of the following serious admonition: "Nevertheless, because of the worldly use for which modern music is principally intended, we must take the most extreme care in selecting musical compositions in modern style; only those which contain no profane utterance, include no reminiscence or motifs common to the theater, and which in no way convey, even in their exterior forms, the general cast of worldly pieces, may be admitted to the churches."

Without wishing to establish the respective responsibilities, we must recognize that the chasm opened between the ordinary musicians and the people of the Church by the *Motu Proprio* of St. Pius X is not only still unspanned, but it is continually growing wider.

To fill this gap and eliminate it seems to me to be the first and essential objective of the Encyclical *Musicae sacrae disciplina*.

No compromise, of course, can be made between the liturgy and profane art, and consequently, musicians who have the intention of writing for the church and who truly wish to create sacred art cannot continue, obviously, to tread the paths of worldly music in general, and of operatic music in particular, but should instead turn to the liturgy and draw inspiration from it, since it is the inexhaustible source, always rich and varied.

Fortunately, the direction of the present evolution of music and the trends it seems to be taking are favorable to this change of direction. The operatic style which dominated almost exclusively the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, drawing to it with an irresistible force of fascination great musicians of that epoch, is today in decline. For the romantic and naturalistic aesthetic has been substituted a kind of antiromanticism. Constructional strength has taken the place of melodic languor and impressionistic color. Harmony has become polytonal, atonal and dodecaphonic. A profound change marks today's music. Moreover, although we have not, any more than at any other evolutionary phase in the history of art, arrived at definitive results, at works of art which are of universal and positive value, it is nevertheless certain that contemporary musicians do not dwell on the past, do not glance behind them, and in no way do they hesitate to advance from the old styles more and more rapidly and deliberately. The curtain has fallen with finality on the day of theater music camouflaged as sacred music, except for a few church composers . . . we do not call them musicians . . . who think they can create something new by re-issuing the old lyrico-sacred compositional formulas, long since rejected by the musical world in general.

Is it, then, possible in this climate of change to fill in and eliminate the deplorable gap which separated artists from the liturgy? The affirmative answer is given by Pius XII, who wrote even in the Encyclical *Mediator Dei* these clear words which seem to me to be directly addressed to those who, in the name of a blind loyalty to Gregorian and Palestinian tradition had ostracized contemporary sacred music: "One cannot, however, maintain," warned the Pontiff, "that modern music and singing should be totally excluded from Catholic worship. On the contrary, provided that such music contains nothing profane or improper, in consideration of the sanctity of the place and the sacred services, and provided that it does not seek after bizarre or uncalled-for effects, it is indispensable that we give it entree to our churches for it can greatly contribute to the magnificence of the ceremonies as well as to the raising of souls to a true devotion and piety."

The presupposed and indispensable psychological condition for the creation of discussion, first, then a unity and collaboration between musicians and churchmen is, for the latter group, based on a disposition tending to break down the instinctive attachment to a tradition which is bound together with a deeply-rooted rejection of everything new; it is also in a disposition to take a sincere interest in and seeking to understand the new forms and new vocabulary of the musicians of today, to have confidence in them, to accept their works with a warm sympathy and heartfelt humility, for it is not easy to assimilate and evaluate a new mode of expression in sacred music at first hearing, or even after a few hearings.

Simply put, we must persuade ourselves of the fact that art is made by artists. What seems at first glance to be a simple truth is in reality not so easy to grasp, for there are many people who think they can solve the problem of sacred music without the effort of a real artist-musician. These people, however, must bring into their music the required mental and spiritual dispositions, if they wish to create sincere sacred music, without bringing in new contaminations which would be as detrimental to the liturgy as to art.

The situation in religious music (designed for concert rather than church) is and has been less critical. Consequently it is less difficult to achieve a meeting of minds on this subject and to bring about the desired entente between musicians and churchmen.

But there is a danger which must be seen and guarded against from both sides: that musicians give preference to religious music and neglect sacred music, liturgical music and extra-liturgical music (we mean, of course, by "religious music", that music not designed for church use, but based on religious texts, themes or concepts). There is a strong temptation for the musician, since he enjoys a greater liberty of expressions, means and themes in non-liturgical religious music. He obtains greater moral and material rewards, totally incomparable to those he draws, at least under present conditions, from music designed for the liturgy or extra-

liturgical services. On the other hand, the churchman has a deep responsibility, because he, through lack of understanding of the artistic and material requirements of the musician, places him in a position where he must neglect liturgical and extra-liturgical music and devote himself exclusively, or nearly so, to non-liturgical religious music.

To maintain a suitable balance between sacred music and religious music is, above all, a question for the profound and fecund vision of both composers and the Church. It is obvious that in addition to the central problem of the unification and collaboration of the great musicians of our day and the churchmen, other problems exist, some large, some small, some theoretical, some practical, which await a similar discussion and at least a gradual resolution.

To note only a few of the more urgent of these, let us mention the economic conditions of composers, choirmasters and organists; the problem of the reconstitution of *Scholae cantorum*, choirs and choral groups; that a more deserving freedom in the use of vocal and instrumental means proper to contemporary art in sacred music; that of performance, even in church . . . of course, without improper aspects and with the necessary precautions . . . of non-liturgical religious music. There are as many unresolved problems as those already covered in the Encyclical *Musicae sacrae*.

The important thing is that the Church become once more, as she was in the past, the great sponsor and noble propagator of art in general, and music in particular, since it is in the church, the House of God, but also our own house, that the people, without distinction of class or background, or any other distinctions, in other words, all the people can be trained day after day by the slow but effective action of that great master of truth, beauty and goodness, Art.

Let us return to the *Motu Proprio* of St. Pius X. In much the same way that writing emphasized the first quality of sacred music, i.e., sanctity, today the Encyclical *Musicae sacrae* of Pius XII emphasizes the second quality of sacred music, which is its artistic value . . . not neglecting the first

quality, of course, but in demanding not only an objective value in the music itself, but also and particularly a subjective value for the church musician.

Then, since, as St. Pius X affirms and Pius XII confirms, the third quality of sacred music, namely universality, proceeds naturally from the sanctity and artistic value of the form, if contemporary artists know how to grasp and put into practice the message of the recent Encyclical, sacred music will become, for the Catholic Church, a splendid *apologia* for our faith, similar to the manifestation produced in the middle ages with Gregorian Chant, and in the Renaissance with vocal polyphony, organ music and instrumental music.

AN IRISH PROSE ON THE BLESSED SACRAMENT “AVE VERBUM INCARNATUM” (XIV century)

By Dom R. J. Hesbert, O.S.B.

Frequently we have heard people remark that it is too bad that the repertoire of pieces for use at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament is so limited. In fact, if we were to examine, for example, the *Variae Preces* of Solesmes, we would note that, except for pieces and extracts of pieces borrowed from the Office of the sacramental feasts, there is only, as a grand total, a collection of two! These are the *Adoro te* and the *Venite populi*. The *Adoro te*, the text of which is so beautiful, is given with a modern melody, for which it is, moreover, difficult to establish an origin and date. In any case, there is never a single manuscript source given for it, even a relatively late one. As for the *Venite populi*, this is a piece which is very beautiful in itself, and which has been saved from oblivion through its retention as either a processional antiphon or as a piece for Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. This however, is not its normal application, for it is not really in its proper place except in the liturgy of the Mass. There it forms a solemn call, moreover a magnificent one, to all the people who are, through the Communion, about to participate in the holy mysteries at the consecration of which they have just assisted. This is the traditional role which it plays in the liturgy of Lyon, where it is still in use. Its performance, on the other hand, is also very subtle; it is one of those things which are both difficult to sing well and at the same time unbearable when sung at any level less than the artistic. This piece requires a well-trained choir, or at least a sufficiently trained group of cantors. Yet, even under these conditions, this is not one of those pieces which can bear frequent repetition; it is, moreover, preferable to save it for special occasions.

In short, if we lay aside all those pieces borrowed from the liturgical services of the feast, we have only, in grand total, for Benedictions of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the *Adoro te*, and then . . . the *Ave verum*, when it is included in the repertoire, for it is not given a place in the *Variae Preces* of Solesmes. This is really a small repertoire! We can readily understand how, whether in religious communities where Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament takes place every day or in so many parishes where the same practice is being extended more and more, that there should be a desire to obtain an increase in the repertoire of such chants, in order to allow the interplay of a little variety in the formation of these programs.

Then, too, some time before the Eucharistic Congress held at Prague some years ago, a voice of authority asked us: "But, come now, are there not some other pieces than those traditionally sung? And really now, is there not some means of finding a few interesting compositions in the manuscripts which we could introduce to general use, so as not to be obliged to repeat the same things over and over?"

It is to answer this demand that we have undertaken a little research in this regard, research the results of which are in general of a positive nature, but for which it would be best first to give a general notion before entering into a presentation of this or that piece which could be practically reestablished in the repertoire.

First, then, are there pieces in existence, besides those from the Office itself, ancient pieces, that is, in honor of the Blessed Sacrament? It suffices to examine the *Repertorium Hymnologicum* of Chevalier to discover immediately an indication of sixty or so rhythmic pieces . . . hymns, proses, responsories, various chants . . . composed with this intention. A good stroke of luck, one might say. This ought to take care of matters in a single effort. We must not make a quick presumption, however! If all these pieces were really useful for the little service we are considering, we would merely have, in truth, the question of making a choice. Things do not work out quite that way, however. As soon as one

studies this repertoire a little more closely, the more sober view must be taken. We do not need much time to discover that, after the necessary eliminations, the residue, all told, is frankly very meagre.

Let us enumerate, in fact, the qualities which must be required of a composition of this kind for it to be really usable.

In the first place, it is preferable that the text be that of a *prayer*, an elevation, and invocation, regardless of the label you give it, but in sum, something which is addressed *to* the Blessed Sacrament and not merely a composition, however beautiful, *on* the Blessed Sacrament or *about* the Blessed Sacrament. At the beginning, we must, then, eliminate the pieces of a too scholarly nature: those, for example, in which too much attention is given to the symbols of the Eucharist in the Old Testament. In itself the idea is a good one . . . it is exploited to considerable degree in the responsories of the Office, several of which are, moreover, sometimes sung at Benediction. It is not entirely correct, however, to impute to them, at least in the function in question, the point of view of "prayer". This service, too, is not the place to set forth, even in a rhymed form, a theological thesis. From this point of view, then, we cannot give consideration to the wonderful *Lauda Sion*, regardless of its many beautiful aspects. This piece gives, to be sure, a complete exposition, as masterly as it is precise, of the whole doctrine of the Eucharist in its different aspects. We could not say, however, that this is a prayer, either directly or integrally. The upsurges at the beginning are basically only a lyrical fashion of getting into the subject matter, set in the form of an invitation to prayer. The rest of the text of the sequence is formed by the explanation of the mystery, and it is not until the end, in the very last two verses, representing only two out of twenty-four, that we have an appearance of a real prayer-form, in the invocation *Bone Pastor . . . Tu qui cuncta scis . . .* Moreover . . . and this forms a confirmation of what we are saying . . . when we use this sequence at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, we customarily sing only the last two verses, from the *Ecce panis angelorum* on. The entire

sequence would most certainly be far too much of a theological thesis, and also unduly long.

This latter, in fact, is a second characteristic which these chants intended for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament must have: they must be short, or at least not too long. In regard to the compositions to rhymed texts, hymns or sequences, three or four verses, or five or six at the most will be plenty. Now among the compositions written in honor of the Blessed Sacrament there are many which greatly exceed these humble proportions and which, therefore, cannot be retained for general use.

We need *short* pieces, and pieces which are really *prayers*. It is, moreover, absolutely necessary that in compositions intended for the use of the congregation that the *style be simple*, the vocabulary within the grasp of all, even those who do not know much Latin. This service is, then, not the time to offer the faithful certain of those complicated pieces in which the abundance of rare words, like artificial and obtuse style, indicate a certain literary virtuosity, possibly, not always exempt from bad taste, but which certainly do not reflect a desire to raise souls in prayer.

Thus, in regard to the text, we need *simple*, and *short* pieces, but which should also be, insofar as possible *prayers*, prayers addressed to the Lord, truly present in the exposed Blessed Sacrament.

But this is not all. Let us not forget that what we are looking for are *chants*. In the manuscripts and in printed editions there are many compositions which have never been sung and which were never intended to be sung. Their place is in the Breviary, not in chant books for the choir. Admitting that they present all the characteristics which we have just enumerated, those of prayers, simple and brief prayers, we still have an entire category of pieces which we must nevertheless avoid.

We suppose that someone will object: "So what? These texts have never really been sung, but could we not, since they present all the necessary conditions, bring them into practice, adapting them to a known or as yet unpublished

tune in the same meter: a hymn, sequence or rhythmic antiphon?" Of course, that is one solution, but it should be considered as a last resort. In a general sense it is better, in regard to sung pieces, to maintain the link desired by the composer between the text on one hand and the melody on the other. This melody was conceived not only to adorn the text, but, in general, to express its meaning.

Thus holding this last solution in provisional reserve, in case we find nothing better, we must examine the compositions, which, presenting all the desirable literary conditions, are found in their manuscripts set to their melodies. The final condition for the retention of these pieces in general practice which is absolutely necessary is that this melody be really *singable*. And in this sense we include the two, and if you will, the three characteristics considered indispensable for the text. We would exclude, therefore, all pieces in which the melody is overloaded and weighty with long melismas, as sometimes is the case; all those in which the melody, lacking in simplicity, could only be performed with difficulty by the general mass of the congregation; and lastly, all those in which the melody, although simple, would not have sufficiently religious character, which stems in great extent from the degree of its modal stability. It would be easy to illustrate this simple enumeration of characteristic examples, but what point is there in dragging out in a purely negative fashion this brief resume of observations to which the examination of manuscript tradition leads us?

If one reflects on the series of strict steps to be followed in examining the ensemble of pieces passed down by tradition, for the elimination of compositions which do not fulfill all these conditions, it is easy to understand our assertion that, from the sixty or so pieces originally taken under consideration, those which might be retained for general use can be counted on the fingers . . . even on those of one hand.

Having taken account of the scope of our inquiry, and at least in a general way of the possibilities left open, we can now proceed to the presentation of some of the music of these compositions which are able, after this triple screen-

ing twice repeated (on text and on melody), to justify their inclusion in the repertoire.

We must admit, however, that the favored pieces thus selected are not all masterpieces, and we are not permitted by conscience to pass on without a few remarks of caution in regard to oratorical problems, before entering into the introduction of the new pieces . . . new works which already have six hundred years behind them. But six hundred years is very little time when in comparison we are able to sing every day from melodies which have thirteen or fourteen hundred years of history! Let the reader be patient, then; we only wish to establish this point with him.

Everyone knows that the Office of the Blessed Sacrament, as we sing it even today, is the work of St. Thomas. Such a subject would have deserved to be treated, from the musical point of view, with the same mastery that was exercised by the angelic Doctor himself from the doctrinal and literary point of view. Here was an opportunity for a composer of genius to enjoy full scope for his art. We must come to believe, however, that in those days genius was lacking, and even ordinary talent, at least as evidenced in the lack of results. In each case the works of the "composers" who were called upon (since it is hardly likely that St. Thomas was concerned himself with the chant) are really feeble. The whole Office of the Blessed Sacrament consists of nothing more than melodic hackwork, and it bears witness not only to an absolute lack of musical imagination, but even, we are compelled to say, to an astonishing lack of understanding of the ancient compositions, which the musicians of the day were content to adapt willy-nilly to the new texts, but in such a wooden fashion that when we sing them, even at the present time, we are often helpless to avoid either a musical exaggeration, a textural misemphasis or both at once.

In this regard, when at the end of the thirteenth century, we have the spectacle of not merely such actual sterility, but also such complete lack of understanding of the ancient tradition, can we justifiably cast stones at those who, in the fourteenth century, at least tried to create "something"?

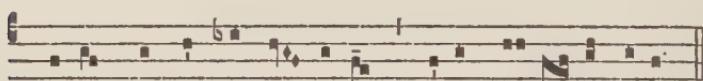
It is indeed a fact that when we come to the fourteenth century we see, and particularly in the field with which we are at present concerned, the production of a quantity of new compositions, which are not merely centonization, or, if you will, copies of ancient works, but works of direct inspiration, conceived in a new spirit and manifesting a taste which, although not that of the antique style, nevertheless has the merit of being really "original", that is, spontaneous, and therefore interesting, since it conveys an aspect of musical thought and melodic taste, characteristic of a new era and of a determined milieu. Seen after centuries, with our present historical perspective, set off against the older backgrounds in what had become in many instances quite secular, it is obvious that this is "dated". But is not this the case in every field of endeavor: literary, artistic or the like? Who would dream of condemning St. Bernard for not being St. Augustine, or St. Francis de Sales for not being St. John Chrysostom? And the Sainte-Chapelle! Have you ever met anyone who would think of comparing it with the Church of Saint-Benoit-sur Loire? There are some things which cannot be set in comparison; they stand on their own values, in their own order, in their own times, in their own climate, as witnesses of a certain country, a certain thought or a certain taste. We can only accept them as they are, seeking merely to understand them, without trying to compare them. And we note then, too, that although there are some things which cannot be compared, this does not mean that they are incompatible. Otherwise, we might just as well take down the north spire of Chartres Cathedral on the basis of our preference for the other. That the south spire is more simple, majestic, virile and direct, nobody would dream of denying. But more *beautiful*? It would be irresponsible to even ask the question, it is so clearly evident that we have here two absolutely different concepts of the same beauty, which far from being incompatible, can easily coexist, and even harmonize.

Once we have taken these oratorical precautions, we have now the intention of presenting to our readers some music of the fourteenth century, or the very end of the thirteenth at the latest, which could be, if one so desires, and with the

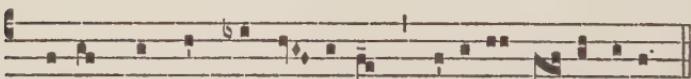
GREGORIAN REVIEW

reservations made above, of some value in bringing variety to the ceremonies of Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

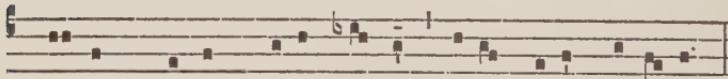
In the present case, we offer our readers a little Irish sequence. The text and melody come from a Prosarium-Troparium of Dublin, today preserved in the library of the University of Cambridge with the numerical designation of *Add. 710*. It is a Ms. which dates from about the year 1360. We have not found this piece in any other manuscript, and even the most complete collections do not indicate that there is any other source. Until proof to the contrary is forthcoming, the Prosarium of Dublin is thus the only document which can give us any idea of its place of origin or its date of composition. The text was published for the first time by Misset and Weale¹ according to this manuscript version. Since then it has been reproduced by Bannister², also according to the single manuscript. The melody has not been published before. Since our manuscript is the only known source of this piece, we have only to transcribe it, both text and melody:



1. Ave, Vérbum incar-ná-tum Dé-i pro- vi-dénti- a.



2. Ave, mundo procre- á-tum Divína cleménti- a.



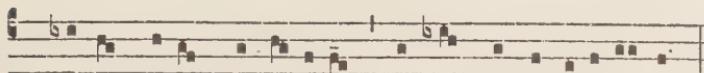
3. A-ve, Chrístus, Dé-us hómo, Pánis, víni spé-ci- e.

1. E. Misset and W.H.I. Weale, *Analecta liturgica*, Volume II, p. 103. Published in Lille-Bruges, 1892.

2. Dreves, *Analecta hymnica*, Vol. XL, Leipzig, 1902, page 55.



4. A-ve, pí-a víva cá-ro De Ma-rí-a Vírgi-ne.



5. Mí-ro módo qui venísti, Et sic násci volu-í-sti.

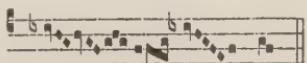


6. Omnes sálva, Córpus Chrísti, Quos cru-óre redemí-sti. Amen. 3

From the textual point of view this piece well fills the required conditions set forth above. It is not too long; it is, in fact, in the same proportions as other pieces used for the same ceremony: the *O salutaris*, *Panis angelicus*, etc. The style is very simple, really easy to explain and within the grasp of all. Finally, but not least in importance, this is a prayer; it is a prayer to the Incarnate Word, to Him Whose body, born of the Virgin Mary, is here present in the Sacrament in the species of bread. Moreover, it is a prayer expressed in the form of a series of salutations, which, we can see, is very well adapted to a function in which, even officially, the idea of *salutation* is applied: *Salutatio Sanctissimi Sacramenti*:

Hail, Thou Word made flesh, by the providence of God!
 Hail, Thou Who has given divine clemency to the world!
 Hail, Christ, God-Man, under the species of bread and
 wine!

3. There is no alteration of the melody called for except, possible, the *Amen*. Here in fact, is what we find in the original:



A- men.

As can be seen, this is a repetition in the form of a vocalise of the melody of the last two lines of the text. This version is obviously inadvisable for retention in the practical restoration.

Hail, living and venerable flesh, born of the Virgin Mary
By a wonderful manner, Thou Who deigned to be born
thus!
Body of Christ, save us, Thou Who hast redeemed us by
Thy blood!

As for the melody, it must stand as it is. Besides the relationship between the B flat and the *mi*, which does not help in giving it any great sense of modal solidity, the *mi* at the cadence very clearly gives an impression of a leading tone, which gives the whole thing a somewhat weak color; this is all obvious. Most people, we do not doubt, would prefer the *Lauda Sion* from the melodic standpoint . . . we, too. But, as we have said, that is not the point in question. Let us say, then, if you will, that this little piece stands in the same relationship to the *Lauda Sion* as does the florid border of a fifteenth century Book of Hours to a solid miniature in the body of the page of a Carolingian Sacramentary. Each person is free to use it or to pass it by; perhaps it will do someone a service, at least those who are already using the *Ave Verum*, which our little sequence seems to recall at more than one point.

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SOLESMES, QUARR ABBEY AND THE
GREGORIAN INSTITUTE OF GENEVA

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- Five weeks, including air travel
- Study with the foremost chant experts
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